IN THE CLAIMS

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (Currently Amended) A method of installing [[a]] gaiters around a range of joints defined between joint members having different dimensions, the method comprising the steps of providing a range of gaiters[[,]] having different dimensions in which each end portion of at least one gaiter of the said gaiter range incorporates a respective single annular fitting section or channel, ~~for use with a range of joints of different dimensions,~~ the range of joint[[s]] dimensions being greater than the range of gaiter[[s]] dimensions and at least some of the gaiters in ~~the~~ said gaiter range being stretchable to fit two or more joints of the said joint range so the said joint range can be accommodated by the range ~~of gaiters wherein a gaiter is selected from the gaiter range~~ to fit a particular joint and applying respective gaiters around the joints such that two or more joints of different dimensions have applied thereto gaiters having the same dimensions and which are stretchable as aforesaid.

26. (Currently Amended) A method of installing [[a]] gaiters around a range of joints defined between joint members having different dimensions, the method comprising the steps of providing a range of gaiters having different dimensions, of the kind having a tubular body part and opposite end portions each tapered in a direction away from the body portion, for use with a range of joints of different dimensions, the range of joints being greater than the range of gaiter[[s]] dimensions and at least some of the gaiters in ~~the~~ said gaiter range being stretchable to fit two or more joints of the said joint range ~~so the said joint range can be accommodated by the range of gaiters wherein a gaiter is selected from the gaiter range to fit a particular joint~~ and applying respective gaiters around the joints such that two or more joints of different dimensions have applied thereto gaiters having the same dimensions and which are stretchable as aforesaid.

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27. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 wherein each joint is defined between first and second members and each gaiter of the said range of gaiters comprises a flexible tubular body having first and second end portions and a central portion therebetween the said end portions being configured for secure attachment to respective first and second joint members.

28. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[2]] 26 wherein each joint is defined between first and second members and each gaiter of the said range of gaiters comprises a flexible tubular body having first and second end portions and a central portion therebetween the said end portions being configured for secure attachment to respective first and second joint members.

29. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which each gaiter incorporates a central portion having folds therein to permit axial extension of the gaiter body.

30. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which the gaiter range includes at least one gaiter having a plurality of seating channels at one or each end portion.

31. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which at least one gaiter of the gaiter range is dimensioned to fit exactly, without any substantial stretching of the gaiter, one or more of the range of joints ~~whilst~~ while also being stretchable to fit other joints in the joint range.

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32. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the~~ a wall of said at least one gaiter is configured and dimensioned to provide the requisite stretch characteristics for a given range of joint member dimensions.

33. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the wall of said~~ at least one gaiter has[[,]] a wall having throughout, a maximum thickness of approximately 3mm.

34. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the said~~ at least one gaiter has stretch characteristics to accommodate the process of fitting the gaiter.

35. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the wall thickness of~~ one or more gaiters in the gaiter range [[is]] have a wall thickness of approximately 2mm.

36. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the said~~ at least one gaiter may be formed from a synthetic rubber compound formulated to provide a minimum stretch of 550% at break.

37. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the said~~ at least one gaiter has stretch characteristics to accommodate prolonged installation in position about a joint.

38. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~one or both end portions of the said~~ at least one gaiter may be formed from a synthetic rubber compound and wherein one or both end portions of at least one gaiter are permanently

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stretchable to a diameter which is 115% of the respective (unstretched) end portion diameter, wherein the stretching of the gaiter results in no more than a 10% change in the properties of the ~~gaiter~~ rubber compound.

39. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which at least some of the gaiters in the said gaiter range are formed from a synthetic rubber compound which is formulated so that the gaiter is also compressible to fit two or more joints of the joint range.

40. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which one or both end portions of ~~the said~~ at least one gaiter of the gaiter range are radially compressible.

41. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the~~ said one or both end portions are radially compressible to a compressed diameter which is 98% of the uncompressed respective end portion diameter.

42. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the~~ said one or both end portions are radially compressible, such that the compressed end portion and, in particular, the pertaining fitting section retains a substantially circular cross-section.

43. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the or~~ each gaiter of the range is stretchable in all directions, and is at least stretchable longitudinally and transversely relative to the longitudinal axis of the gaiter.

44. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which ~~the~~ said end portions of one or more gaiters of the gaiter range incorporate one or more internal

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~~and/~~ or external ribs or beads which extend wholly or partially around the circumference of a respective end portion of ~~the~~ said one or more gaiters.

45. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which the wall thickness of the gaiters in the gaiter range is constant.

46. (Currently Amended) The method according to Claim [[1]] 25 in which one or more gaiters of the range incorporate a gaiter wall which varies in thickness to alter the flexing characteristics of the respective gaiter(s).

47. (Currently Amended) A gaiter suitable for use in the method of Claim [[1]] 25 wherein the gaiter is stretchable to fit two or more joints of a joint range.

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